

Mr. DOLE. I ask unanimous consent that the amendment be agreed to, the bill be deemed read a third time, passed, as amended, the motion to reconsider be laid upon the table, and that any colloquy and statements relating to the bill be placed at the appropriate place in the RECORD.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

So the amendment (No. 3463) was agreed to.

So the bill (H.R. 2196), as amended, was passed.

MESSAGES FROM THE HOUSE

At 10:25 a.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Ms. Goetz, one of its reading clerks, announced that the House has agreed to the following resolution (H. Res. 363) that the Honorable CONSTANCE A. MORELLA, a Representative from the State of Maryland, be, and she is hereby, elected Speaker pro tempore during any absence of the Speaker, such authority to continue not later than Tuesday, February 27, 1996.

MEASURE PLACED ON THE CALENDAR

The following measure was read the second time and placed on the calendar:

S. 1561. A bill for the relief of the individuals whose employment at the White House Travel Office was terminated.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

The following bills and joint resolutions were introduced, read the first and second time by unanimous consent, and referred as indicated:

By Mr. SIMPSON (for himself and Mr. ROCKEFELLER) (by request):

S. 1563. A bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to revise and improve eligibility for medical care and services under that title, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Veterans Affairs.

By Mr. CRAIG:

S. 1564. A bill to amend the Small Reclamation Projects Act of 1956 to authorize the Secretary of the Interior to provide loan guarantees for water supply, conservation, quality and transmission projects, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

S. 1566. A bill to supplement the Small Reclamation Projects Act of 1956 and to supplement the Federal Reclamation laws by providing for Federal cooperation in non-Federal projects and for participation by non-Federal agencies in Federal projects; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

By Mr. HOLLINGS:

S. 1566. A bill to authorize the Secretary of Transportation to issue a certificate of documentation with appropriate endorsement for employment in the coastwise trade for the vessel *Marsh Grass Too*; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

SUBMISSION OF CONCURRENT AND SENATE RESOLUTIONS

The following concurrent resolutions and Senate resolutions were read, and referred (or acted upon), as indicated:

By Mr. ROBB:

S. Res. 225. A resolution urging the President to undertake measures to facilitate the immediate withdrawal of the Iranian Revolutionary Guards from Bosnia-Herzegovina; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

By Mr. INOUE:

S. Con. Res. 41. A concurrent resolution expressing the sense of the Congress that the George Washington University is important to the Nation and urging that the importance of the University be recognized and celebrated through regular ceremonies; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

STATEMENTS ON INTRODUCED BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

By Mr. SIMPSON (for himself and Mr. ROCKEFELLER) (by request):

S. 1563. A bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to revise and improve eligibility for medical care and services under that title, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Veterans Affairs.

VA HEALTH CARE LEGISLATION

• Mr. SIMPSON. Mr. President, I am most pleased to join with the distinguished ranking member of the Committee on Veterans' Affairs in introducing, by request, legislation intended to reform the operation of VA's health care program. This legislation places into statutory language the eligibility reform proposal of the many veterans' service organizations who each year prepare and submit to the Congress the so called independent budget.

The successful operation of the VA health care system has become one of the most pressing issues faced by the Committee on Veterans' Affairs and the Congress. Many observers feel that changing the current priorities for health care is the certain key to resolving the problems faced by both VA and the veterans it serves. The proposal we introduce today is one of at least five different proposals before the Congress and introduction of this legislation should be viewed as neither endorsement nor opposition to this specific proposal. I join in introduction of the legislation in order to put before the Congress both the proposal and the ideas upon which it is based. I plan to chair committee hearings on the issue later this spring. Both the committee's hearings and legislative process will be much improved if we can view this proposal in legislative format.

As a life member of the Veterans of Foreign Wars, one of the organizations that has prepared the proposal, I understand how important this issue is to America's veterans, the Congress, to the Department of Veterans Affairs, and to the American people who must fund whatever decision is reached by the Congress.

I thank my fine personal friend from West Virginia for the constructive and active role that he played as chairman

of the Veterans' Committee and continues to play as ranking minority member. He has been most helpful and courteous to me. I always look forward to working with him and the members of the committee as we work together to address the difficult questions we face concerning veterans' health care and the future structure of the Veterans Health Administration. •

• Mr. ROCKEFELLER. Mr. President, as the ranking Democrat on the Committee on Veterans' Affairs, I am delighted to join today with the chairman of the committee, Senator SIMPSON, in introducing legislation that would reform eligibility for VA health care. We are doing so at the request of the four veterans service organizations—AMVETS, Disabled American Veterans, Paralyzed Veterans of America, and Veterans of Foreign Wars—that develop the so-called independent budget [IB].

While it was my policy, as chairman of the Committee on Veterans' Affairs, to introduce legislation proposed by the administration so that my colleagues and others with an interest would have specific bills to which they might direct their attention and comments, I have not done that for entities other than the administration. Senator SIMPSON has followed a similar policy in his two terms as the committee's chairman. However, in this instance, we have agreed to introduce this legislation so that it might be before the committee later in this session when we take up the issue of the reform of the current eligibility criteria for VA health care.

In introducing administration-requested legislation, we always reserved the right to support the provisions of, as well as any amendment to, such by-request legislation. Obviously, that same policy applies to the bill we are introducing today.

While I have been working with representatives of the IB group for many months in an effort to translate the group's narrative description of proposed eligibility reform into legislative language, I have done so without in any way endorsing the result. I intend to wait to support any specific eligibility reform legislation until after the committee has held hearings and the many issues connected with this subject have been explored in some depth and detail. •

By Mr. CRAIG:

S. 1564. A bill to amend the Small Reclamation Projects Act of 1956 to authorize the Secretary of the Interior to provide loan guarantees for water supply, conservation, quality and transmission projects, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

S. 1565. A bill to supplement the Small Reclamation Projects Act of 1956 and to supplement the Federal Reclamation laws by providing for Federal cooperation in non-Federal projects and for participation by non-Federal